

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 568 (Delegate Glenn)
 Rules and Executive Nominations

General Assembly - Members - Constituent Services Fund

This bill authorizes a member of the General Assembly to establish a constituent services fund and to accept contributions to the fund. In a calendar year, a person may contribute up to \$500 to a member’s fund, and a member may not spend more than \$80,000 from the fund. However, a person may contribute personal property valued at not more than \$1,000 per calendar year to a member’s fund in excess of the \$500 limit. Also, a member may make unlimited contributions to the fund.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$25,000 in FY 2014 only for the State Board of Elections (SBE) to make necessary computer modifications in order to facilitate the reporting of all contributions to and expenditures made from any constituent services fund established by a member. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	25,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$25,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Personal property contributed to a member’s fund must be valued at the fair market value of the property.

When a member leaves office or abolishes the fund, any unused funds must be used to either (1) pay any debts incurred in providing constituent services or (2) make a donation to a nonprofit organization.

A member who establishes a fund must report all contributions made to the fund and all payments made from the fund on the member's campaign finance reports. A member may not use money in the fund to conduct campaign activities or to distribute campaign material.

Current Law/Background

Campaign Finance Reporting

For each election in which a campaign finance entity (including a ballot issue committee) participates, it generally must file campaign finance reports at various times prior to and after the primary and general elections. The reports must contain information required by SBE with respect to all contributions received and all expenditures made by or on behalf of the campaign finance entity during a reporting period. Annual reports generally must also be filed on the third Wednesday in January.

Funding for Expenses of Members

Members of the General Assembly are eligible for funds to support office operational expenses and staff compensation. In fiscal 2013, each delegate received \$39,894 and each senator received \$33,395, with slightly higher amounts for delegation officials, committee chairs, and members of the leadership. There are specified requirements as to the amount of the money that must be used for staff compensation, as well as caps on the amounts that may be spent on other expenses.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 1131 of 2011 received an unfavorable report from the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): State Ethics Commission, State Prosecutor's Office, State Board of Elections, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 7, 2013
mm/lgc

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